

Visitor Information Center Study

Current State of the System Report

Introduction

The Vermont Visitor Information Center Division (VICD) facilities provide a network of locations primarily along the National Highway System (NHS) throughout Vermont that serve the traveling public. The primary function of the VICD system is to provide safety breaks to prevent drowsy or fatigued driving by providing safe areas to rest or change drivers¹. The facilities additionally provide travelers with access to restroom facilities, shelter from adverse weather, travel information, free coffee, free wireless internet, vending machines, Vermont promotions, and travel ambassadors. The aim of the system is to deliver these essential safety purposes and additional traveler amenities through well-maintained facilities with exceptional customer service.

Visitor Information Center Division History

During the construction of the interstate in Vermont, rest areas were constructed alongside the interstate system to provide basic services to the traveling public. These facilities were a stop gap during a time when few services were available off of the system's exits. The Agency of Transportation (VTrans) was responsible for the network of roadside rest area facilities, including reconstruction of many system locations during the 1980s. It was during this time that the system saw a steady increase in the number of visitors, in particular the number of tourists, utilizing the rest area facilities. Recognizing the opportunity to capitalize on the state's visitors and bolster the tourism economy, the state turned over the responsibility of the system to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) in 1992. It was through this management that the role of the system was expanded to provide information to travelers, particularly the promotion of Vermont's tourism industry. The opportunity to market to the state's visitors is often seen as an alternative approach to billboards, which are not allowed on the state's highways, to promote Vermont's brand. At the time, this marketing opportunity was focused on a system of 24 Visitor Information Center locations with additional facilities beyond a simple parking rest area.

Through the 1990s, the Visitor Information Center system experienced increased traffic and visitors coupled with aging infrastructure. As a result, the deterioration of the system's assets proved to be a challenge for ACCD to manage and maintain, compelling the transfer of the deteriorated and deficient assets to the Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS). The system's 24 locations were reduced to 20 through multiple legislative actions, ultimately resulting in four locations being razed. A 1997 Memorandum of Understanding defined the responsibilities of BGS, VTrans, and ACCD in the reconstruction, maintenance, and operation of the system going forward. In 2005, an updated Memorandum of Understanding superseded the agreement between agencies to better define the roles of

¹ AASHTO, *Guide for Development of Rest Areas on Major Arterials and Freeways*, 2001.

BGS and VTrans in operating and maintaining the VICD system facilities. This included the responsibility of continuing to coordinate with ACCD towards the goals of providing traveler services and develop community partnerships, but no specific role for ACCD otherwise. During the recession in 2009, the system was streamlined with the closure of four locations and limited hours of operation for the remaining locations. The system added a new location in 2013 as part of the Bennington By-Pass project, rounding out the Visitor Information system to 17 locations. In 2020, closure of the White River Junction Visitor Center brought the number of locations back to 16. These 16 facilities provide a network of VICD locations among a broader network of roadside facilities primarily along the National Highway System in Vermont.

System Inventory

There are a variety of roadside facilities along Vermont's highways that serve the traveling public and freight carriers. It is important to define the various roadside facilities to understand the network of locations and the services they provide, as shown in **Figure 1** below.

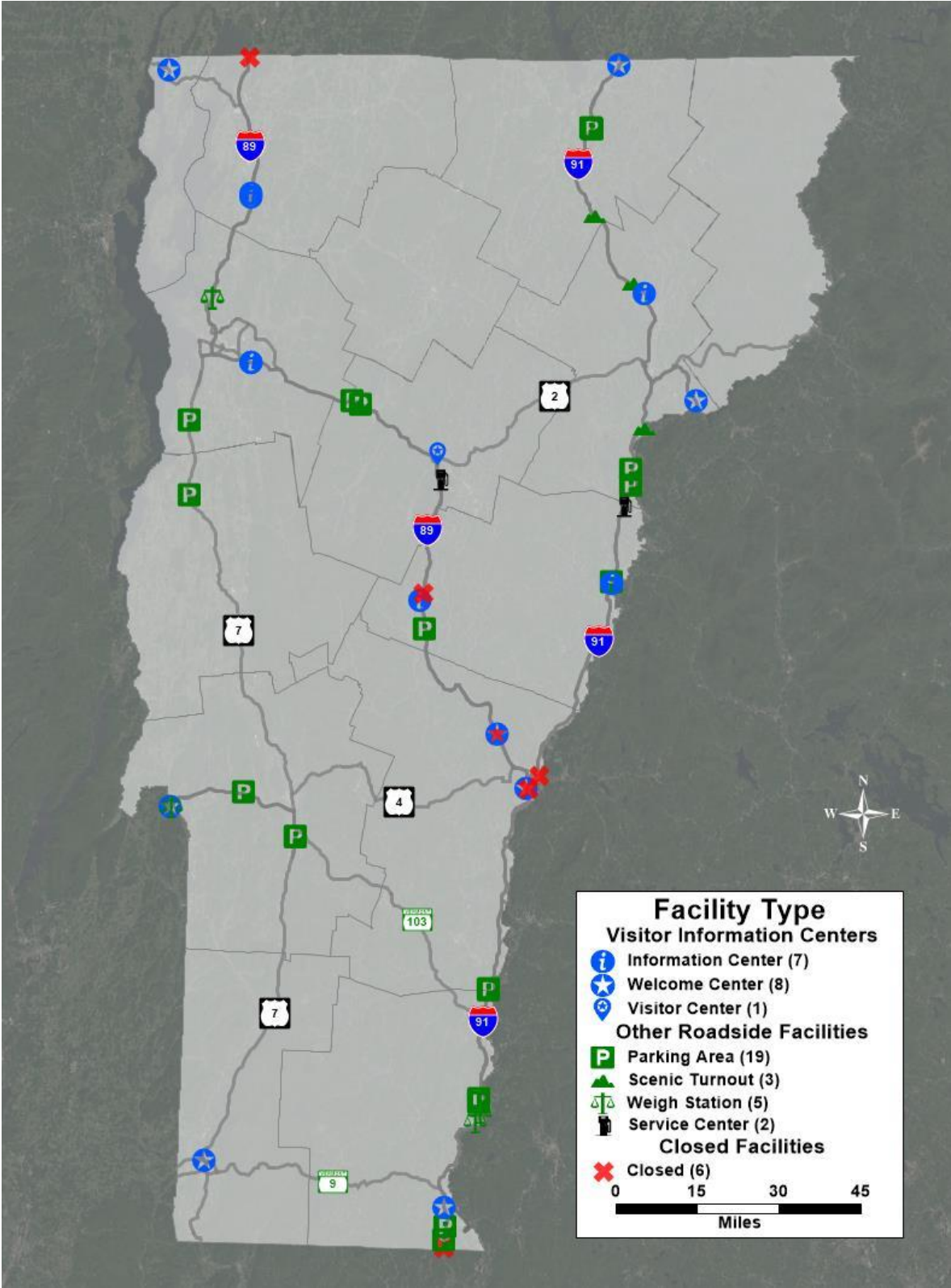
Visitor Information Centers Division Network

- **Information Center** (7 facilities): These facilities have direct access to the interstate, provide refuge for brief safety breaks, and provide additional amenities like restroom facilities and traveler information;
- **Welcome Center** (8 facilities): These facilities provide the same set of amenities as the Information Centers, but are located near the border of Vermont with a focus on providing gateway services for travelers coming into the state along the major corridors of entry;
- **Visitor Center** (1 facility): These facilities are located off the interstate network without direct access to the highway and provide similar amenities like restroom facilities and traveler information.

Other Roadside Facilities

- **Service Center (2 facilities)**: Through public/private partnerships with the state, Service Centers are locations that provide restroom facilities and traveler information as well as additional services including food and fueling. The state provides official signage on the highway directing travelers to these locations and facilitates the traveler information and marketing efforts through brochures at each location. In exchange, the private entity manages and operates the facilities. The Maplewood Travelers Service Center in Berlin is open 24 hours a day to provide a full suite of services to travelers just off I-89. The P&H Truck Stop, located in Wells River, provides a similar suite of services to travelers just off I-91. Both locations provide traveler information through dedicated space for the VICD Brochures Program.
- **Weigh Stations (5), Parking Areas (19), and Scenic Turnouts (3)**: These facilities have direct access to the highway and provide varying levels of refuge for brief safety breaks but lack additional amenities.

Figure 1: Roadside Facilities along the National Highway System in Vermont.



In addition to the various open roadside facilities depicted in **Figure 1**, there are a number of roadside locations on the NHS network that previously served the traveling public and are now closed. The state-owned rights-of-way and some infrastructure exist at six such closed locations across the state.

Although the various types of roadside facilities provide overlapping functions, distinguishing between the facility types is imperative to understanding the functions they serve from a safety and tourism perspective as well as the mechanisms by which they provide those functions, through federal, state, or private funding.

System Requirements & Policies

The recommendation of a 60-mile interval at which to provide a safe area for drivers to park and rest was developed through crash data assessment and published in the *AASHTO Guide for Development of Rest Areas on Major Arterials and Freeways*². The VICD facilities are also part of the broader network of Jason's Law eligible locations, which aims to "address the shortage of long-term parking for commercial motor vehicles on the National Highway System network." Although there is no mandate for operating visitor information centers, concerns for driver and commercial vehicle operator safety compel the state, with support from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), to operate a system of rest areas that provide safe locations for drivers to rest. Other State Departments of Transportation have established alternative rest area spacing guidelines (e.g. Minnesota: 30 miles, New York: 50-70 miles, Florida: 45 minutes, Washington: 30-45 miles).

For the purposes of an initial assessment and gap analysis, the directional distance between Vermont's interstate roadside facilities was enumerated in **Appendix A**. Compared to AASHTO recommended spacing, 28 of the 29 state-run interstate facilities that are currently operational meet this recommendation by providing spacing of less than 60 miles. Facilities include VICD locations, parking areas, weigh stations, and scenic turnouts. Twenty-seven of these facilities are less than 34 miles apart. The one gap that is greater than the AASHTO recommendation is a 60.9-mile distance on I-91 northbound between the Rockingham North Parking Area and the Bradford North Rest Area. This is also the greatest distance between facilities identified as Jason's Law locations. This gap is a result of the closure of the Hartford North Rest Area. Operational VICD locations that are preventing gaps from exceeding the 60-mile recommendation include the Sharon Welcome Center, the Bradford Information Center, and the Hartford Welcome Center. It is important to note that this evaluation of recommended spacing did not include VICD locations off of the interstate, including a number of Welcome Center locations.

When operated by the state, rest areas are subject to a number of rules and regulations. Interstate rest areas may not provide any commercial goods or services where charges are made to the traveling public, with the exception of telephones and vending machines. Food and beverage sales, limited to vending machines at these locations on the interstate system, prioritizes machines operated by organizations supporting individuals with visual disabilities,

² AASHTO, *Guide for Development of Rest Areas on Major Arterials and Freeways*, 2001

as is outlined in the Randolph-Sheppard Act³. The limitations to the sale of goods and services at these locations aligns with the rule that the right-of-way “shall be devoted exclusively to public highway purposes.”⁴ Advertising at information centers is allowable under certain provisions, including that it must occur inside buildings or is not legible from the highway⁵. Additional detail on Federal and State requirements and policies can be found in **Appendix B**.

System Management Responsibilities

Operation of the Vermont Visitor Information Centers Division locations has been the responsibility of the Agency of Transportation (prior to 1992) and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (1992-1997) in the past. Since 1997, the operation of the network’s facilities has been the responsibility of the Visitor Information Center Division (VICD) within the Agency of Administration’s Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS). Memoranda of Understanding between the Agency of Transportation (VTrans) and the Department of Buildings and General Services from 1997 and 2005 define the responsibilities of each agency to operate and maintain the network of Visitor Information Center Division locations.

Figure 2: Bradford Visitor Information Center (Left), Guilford (Southeastern Vermont) Welcome Center (Right)



According to a 2005 Memorandum of Understanding between the agencies, coordination of activities to maintain and operate the Visitor Information Center locations should be facilitated by a collaborative committee comprised of representatives from BGS (3), VTrans (3), and FHWA (1) that meet quarterly. The representative parties are responsible for coordination of activities through committee membership, reviewing improvement

³ 23 CFR 111 Agreements relating to use of and access to rights-of-way – Interstate System

⁴ 23 CFR 1.23 Rights-of-Way

⁵ 23 CFR 752 Landscape and Roadside Development

programs, collaborative development of a facilities program, annual budget proposals, and collaboration with FHWA to oversee development and implementation of the program.

The Agency of Transportation (VTrans) owns the land and facilities and is responsible for activities such as programming major maintenance activities, support for right of way services, snow removal on travel lanes and parking areas, pavement and guardrail repair, site lighting maintenance, access for commercial vehicle enforcement activities, coordination with FHWA on federal-aid eligible projects, tracking contracts, and project reporting. BGS is responsible for the operation of the system including managing capital and maintenance projects, right of way planning, ensuring facilities are clean, safe, and in good repair, snow removal on walkways and sign plazas, coordination with ACCD to provide traveler services, coordination with VTrans on consultant and contractor activities, project development, and development of system budgets. Close collaboration between BGS and VTrans to develop and deliver major preventative maintenance and capital projects has been further solidified through the shared responsibilities outlined in the Special Experimental Project No. 14 (SEP 14) agreement, detailed in the *System Funding* section below.

Beyond the Agency collaboration, there are a few locations in the network that leverage local partnerships to provide staffing for daily operations and ambassadorship while limiting the cost burden to VICD. The Georgia Southbound Information Center and two Williston Information Centers are operated in collaboration with the Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce. The Bennington Welcome Center is similarly operated via a contract with the Southwestern Vermont Chamber of Commerce. A separate grant program supported staffing at the White River Junction Welcome Center prior to its closure in 2020.

Facility Characteristics and Condition Assessments

A summary of key characteristics for each location in the VICD network is included in **Table 1** on the following page. The category, location, facility size, year built or renovated, hours of operation, services, staffing, parking supply, and adjacent roadway estimates of average daily traffic for each site are included in the inventory.

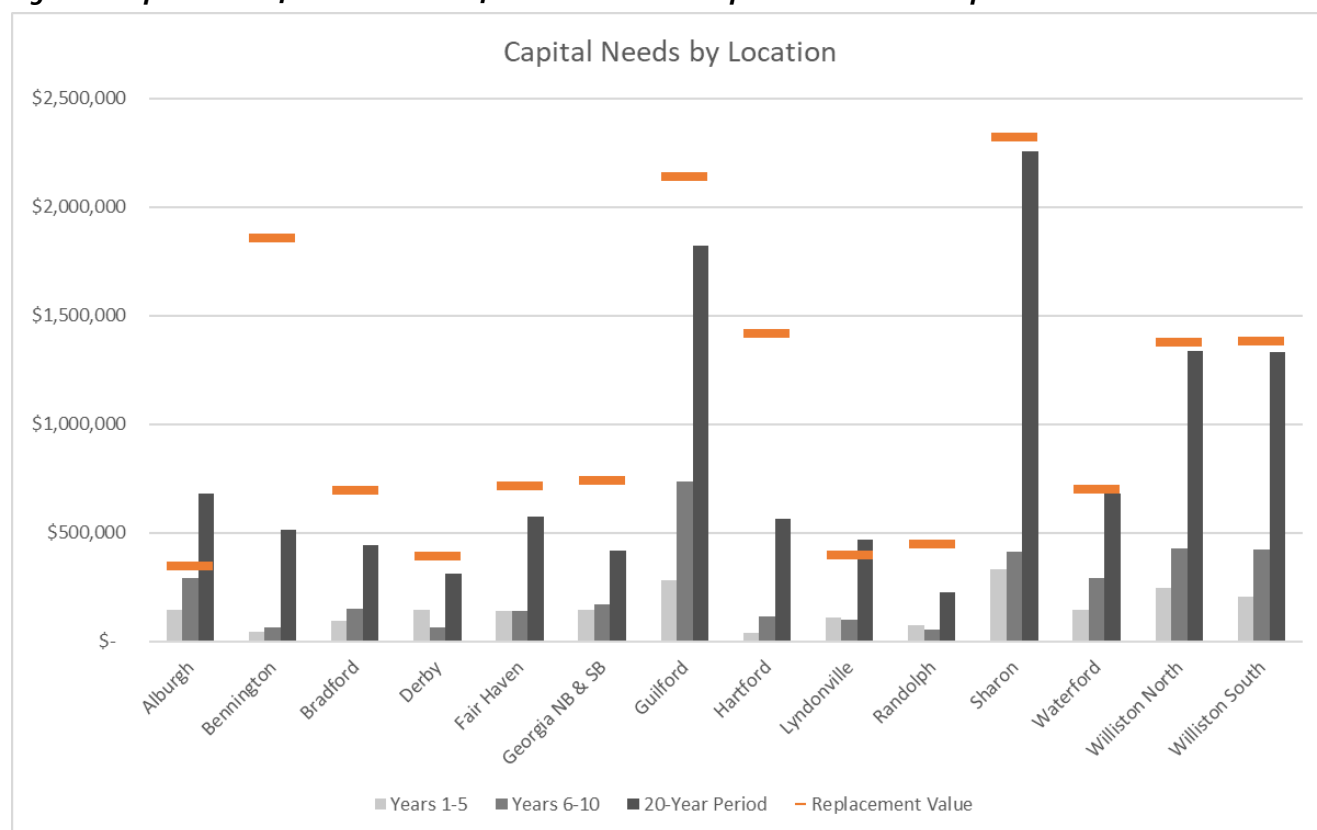
Table 1. Visitor Information Center Site Characteristics

Site	Center Designation	Location	Date of Construction	Renovations Completed	Building Area (Square Feet)	Land Area (Acres)	Hours of Operation	Staffing (Permanent)	Staffing (Temporary)	Car Parking Spaces	Truck Parking Spaces	Restrooms	Adjacent Facility Traffic 2018
Alburgh	Welcome	US 2	1996		1,150	1.72	9 AM - 5 PM	1	3	11	2*	4	4,900
Bennington	Welcome	US 7	2013		7,500	9.3	7 AM - 9 PM	0	0	75	11	16	10,900
Bradford NB	Information	I-91 N	1995		2,290	3.2	7 AM - 7 PM	1	2	17	3	9	5,600
Derby SB	Welcome	I-91 S	1968		1,300	1	7 AM - 7 PM	2	2	21	10*	7	3,200
Fair Haven	Welcome	US 4	1980	1997	2,345	4.3	7 AM - 7 PM	3	2	32	7	10	1,800
Georgia NB	Information	I-89 N	1968	1999	1,230		7 AM - 7 PM	2	1	15	8*	8	22,000
Georgia SB	Information	I-89 S	1999		1,230		7 AM - 9 PM	0	0	13	7	8	22,000
Guilford NB	Welcome	I-91 N	1999		7,130	13	7 AM - 11 PM	3	10	107	20	24	18,300
Hartford SB	Welcome	I-91 S	1964	2012	750	6.2	7 AM - 7 PM	3	1	25	10	7	19,800
Lyndonville SB	Information	I-91 S	1973	1996	1,300	0.9	7 AM - 7 PM	2	2	22	8*	8	4,800
Montpelier	Visitors	US 2		1998			6 AM - 5 PM	2	5	0	0	2	7,500
Randolph SB	Information	I-89 S	1970		1,470	11.3	7 AM - 7 PM	2	2	18	10*	7	16,700
Sharon NB	Information	I-89 N	1960s	2005	7,440	7.23	7 AM - 11 PM	3	3	56	9	13	18,800
Waterford NB	Welcome	I-93 N	1982	1997	2,340	1.8	7 AM - 7 PM	2	2	26	8*	7	6,200
Williston NB	Information	I-89 N	1960s	2002	4,600	5.3	7 AM - 11 PM	0	0	31	11	21	36,300
Williston SB	Information	I-89 S	1960s	2002	4,600	3.5	7 AM - 11 PM	0	0	33	9	21	36,300

* Truck parking spaces are not striped

Full condition assessments of the facilities at all Welcome Center and Information Center locations in the system were assembled during the period from 2014 to 2019⁶. These condition assessments tabulated the capital needs for the facilities over the next 20 years by inventorying all of the systems and components in place, observing their current condition, identifying the need to repair, replace, or modernize systems or components, and estimate the anticipated renewal or replacement costs. The capital needs over the 20-year time horizon are summarized according to these assessments for each location in **Figure 3**, noting that the capital needs reported at each time frame are cumulative.

Figure 3. Capital Needs for each Visitor Information Center Compared to a Current Replacement Value



Assuming a \$300 per square foot replacement cost as a consistent metric across the system, an estimate of the current replacement cost for each location was assessed for comparison⁷. New facilities, like Bennington (2013) and Hartford (2012), have a significantly larger gap between the anticipated capital needs and the current replacement value than older facilities in the system, like Waterford (1982), Randolph (1970), and Derby (renovated 1988). Based on this comparison, the 20-year estimated capital needs for Alburgh and Lyndonville would exceed current replacement values. The capital needs, as determined through the individual

⁶ Various Facility Condition Assessments prepared for BGS by EMG with site visit dates and reports from 2014 to 2019.

⁷ Based on the figures used in the Facility Condition Assessments by EMG, a range of \$175 to \$300 per square foot cost was applied to the existing square footage of the facility to determine a current replacement value. The upper limit of this range was used to determine current replacement values for each location for consistency.

location assessments, is expected to be approximately \$11.6M out to a 20-year time horizon, based on current dollars (i.e. not adjusted for inflation or increasing costs of construction). It is important to note that these assessments did not include the Visitor Center locations in White River Junction and Montpelier.

Visitor Information Center System Funding and Expenditures

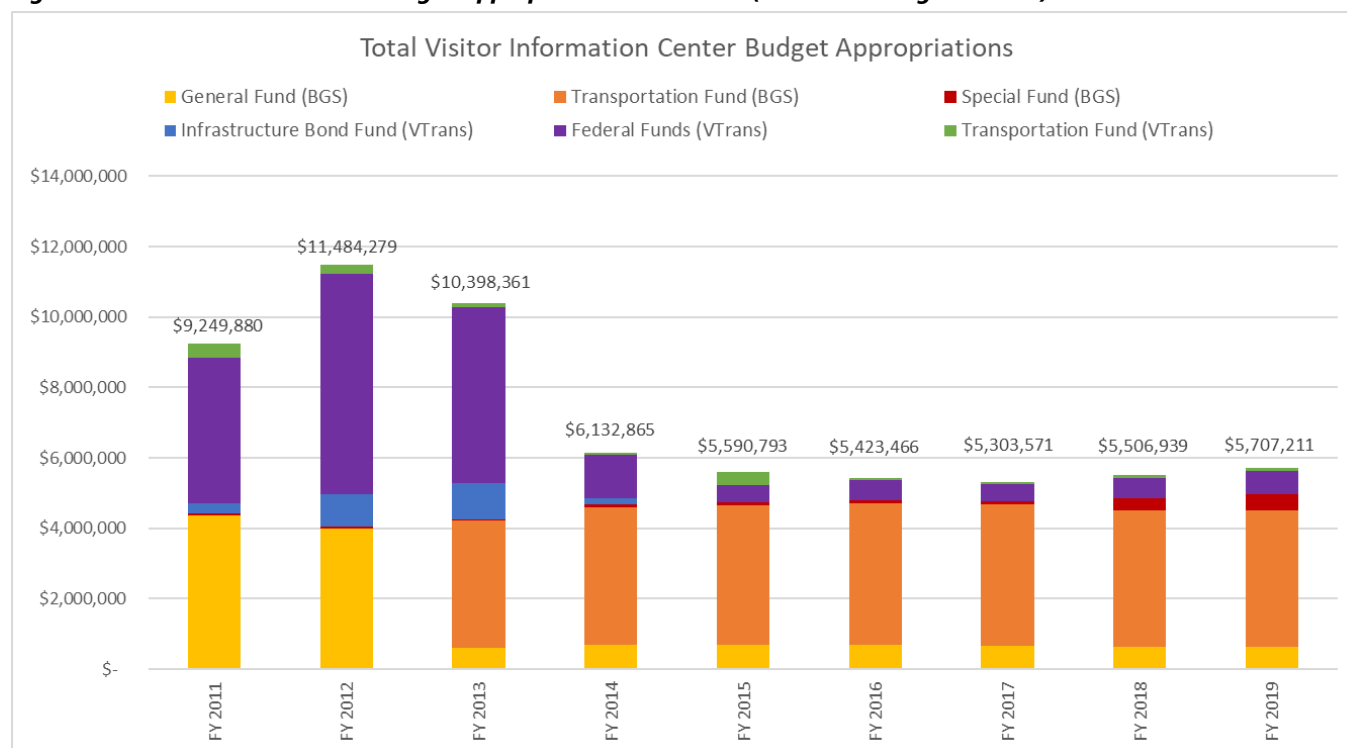
System Funding

The annual appropriations to operate, maintain, and preserve the Visitor Information Center system are generated through two primary funding streams. Daily operations, staffing, and routine maintenance activities within the VICD system are funded through BGS' Visitor Information Center Division budget, which includes revenue from the State's General and Transportation Funds. These budget items include appropriations for staff salaries and benefits, buildings and grounds operating expenses, routine cleaning, maintenance, and repair services, and support of promotional programs (e.g. wireless internet services). It is important to note that marketing through the brochure program and refreshments through the coffee program are self-funded endeavors that expand upon the amenities available at the various VICD facilities and are budgeted through Special Funds.

In addition to the operating budget through BGS, annual appropriations through the VTrans Rest Area program provide support for major preventative maintenance projects at the Visitor Information Centers. Although historically these types of major maintenance projects were supported through state dedicated funds, VTrans has been approved to use federal-aid funds to support a limited scope of major preventative maintenance projects. This is made possible through the Special Experimental Project No. 14 (SEP 14), which outlines alternative contracting procedures to fulfill major preventative maintenance, preservation, and repair needs of the system. The projects that are funded through the SEP 14 program are developed by BGS in collaboration with VTrans' Municipal Assistance Bureau, managed by BGS Project Managers, and administered according to the Bulletin 3.5 Contracting Procedures and VTrans' Project Development Process Manual.

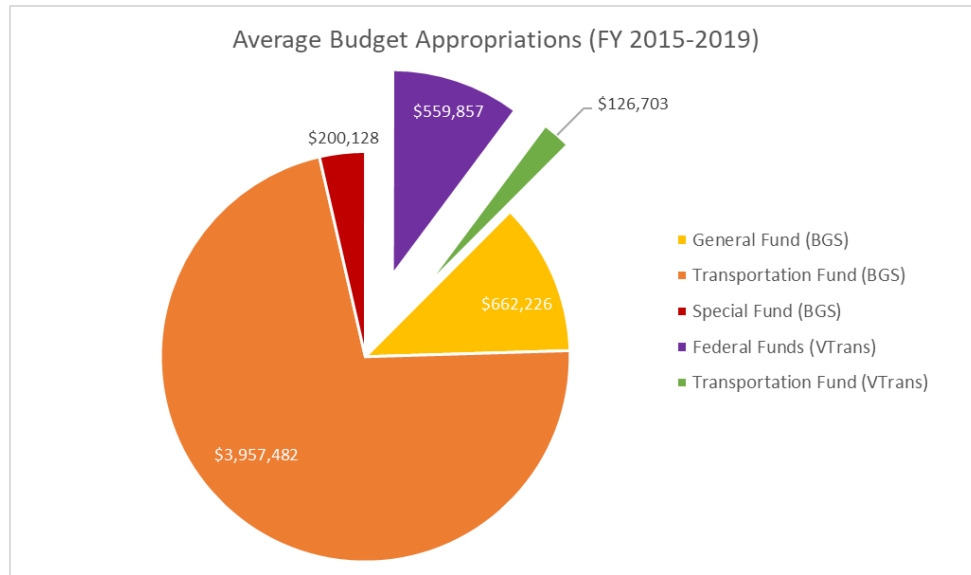
The funding through both appropriation mechanisms in the annual state budget are summarized for fiscal years 2011 through 2019 in **Figure 4**. From FY 2007 to FY 2012, the program was funded primarily through the General Fund. Large Federal Fund appropriations earmarked for a new facility at the Hartford Southbound Information Center and for the new Bennington Welcome Center were allocated in FY 2011 through FY 2014. The base operational funding transitioned back to the Transportation Fund as new facilities came online in 2012 and 2013. Since FY 2015, the base operations and major preventative maintenance programs have been nearly level-funded with similar total annual appropriations of approximately \$5.5 million.

Figure 4: VICD Facilities Annual Budget Appropriations as Passed (FY 2011 through FY 2019)



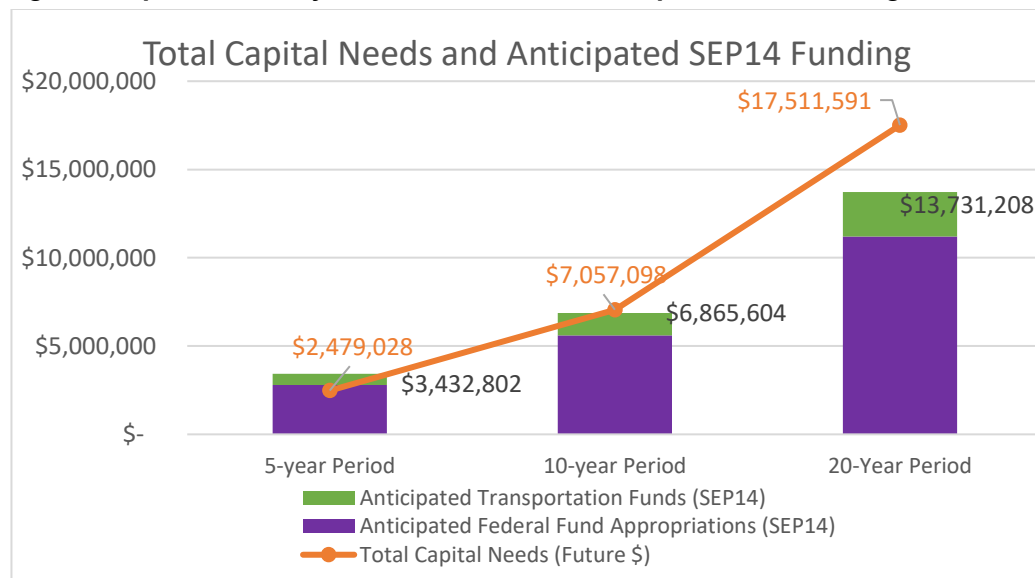
Given the relatively steady funding from FY 2015 through FY 2019, the average appropriations by funding source are summarized in **Figure 5**. Over the last five years, operations and routine maintenance of the system’s facilities has been supported through BGS Information Center appropriations at a little over \$4.8M per year on average, or approximately 88% of the system funding. Capital projects and major preventative maintenance have been supported through VTrans Rest Area program appropriations at approximately \$687,000 on average per year. The VTrans appropriations of just over 12% per year on average are shown exploded from the pie chart below. It is important to note that these appropriations are budgeted with program funds that, through the SEP 14 agreement, require BGS project management to follow project development and contracting protocols in close collaboration with VTrans.

Figure 5: VICD Facilities Average Annual Budget Appropriations (FY 2015 through FY 2019)



The capital needs of the system, as summarized by the individual Facility Conditions Assessments, are expected to total approximately \$17.5M over the next 20 years considering inflation, wage increases, and construction cost escalations. Assuming the current level of VTrans Rest Area appropriations remains constant over the same 20-year time horizon, the total anticipated funding for major preventative maintenance of approximately \$13.7M will not be adequate to address the system's capital needs as shown in the comparison in **Figure 6**. It is important to note that Rest Area appropriations serve not only the Visitor Information Center locations, but also the broader network of weigh stations, parking areas, and scenic turnouts, where allocations may be required for pavement and other capital investments. These figures also do not include any anticipated capital funding required for construction of new facilities at the existing network of locations.

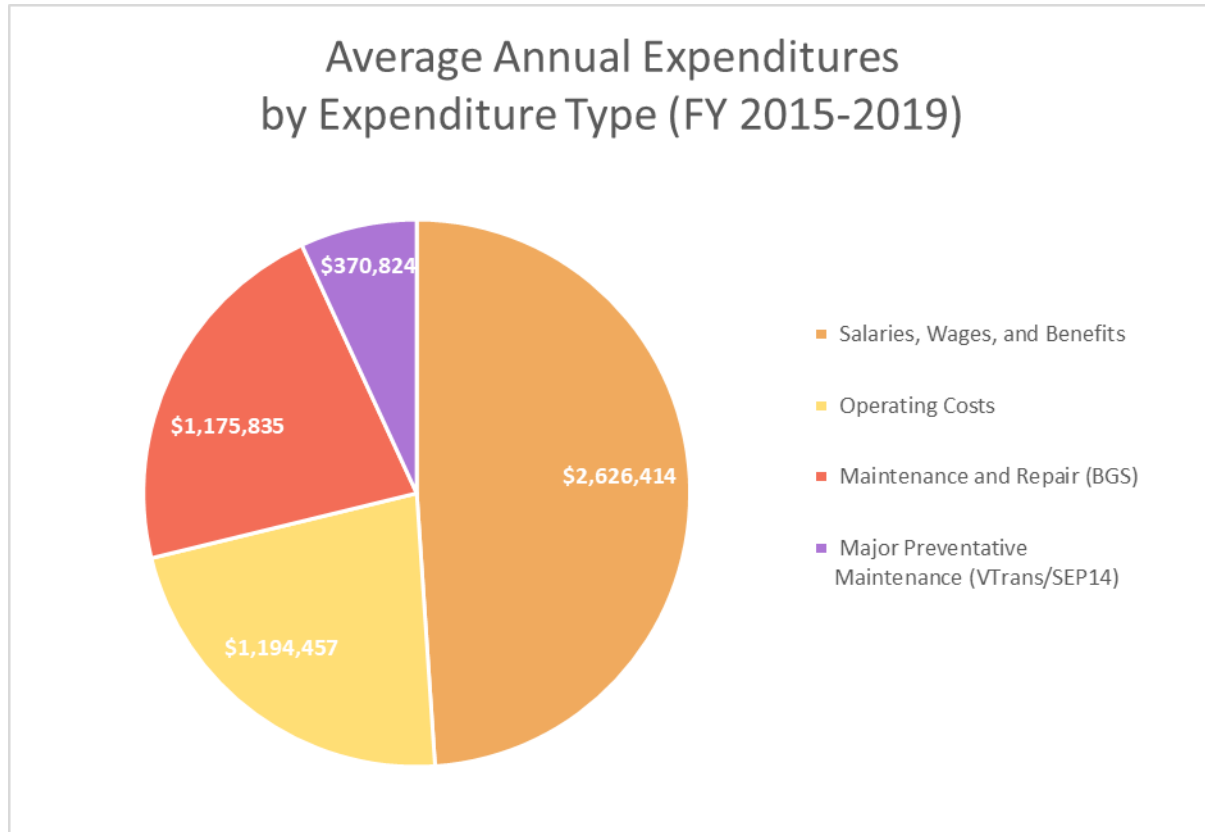
Figure 6: Capital Needs (adjusted for inflation) and Anticipated SEP 14 Funding (level funding)



System Expenditures

As shown below in **Figure 7**, salaries, wages, and benefits comprise approximately half of the VICD system expenditures. Over the past five years, this category of expense has been consistently just over \$2.5M. The operating costs (e.g. heating, paper products, etc.) and routine maintenance and repair categories of spending have averaged approximately \$1.25M over the last five years.

Figure 7: Average Annual System Expenditures (based on budget actuals FY 2015-19)

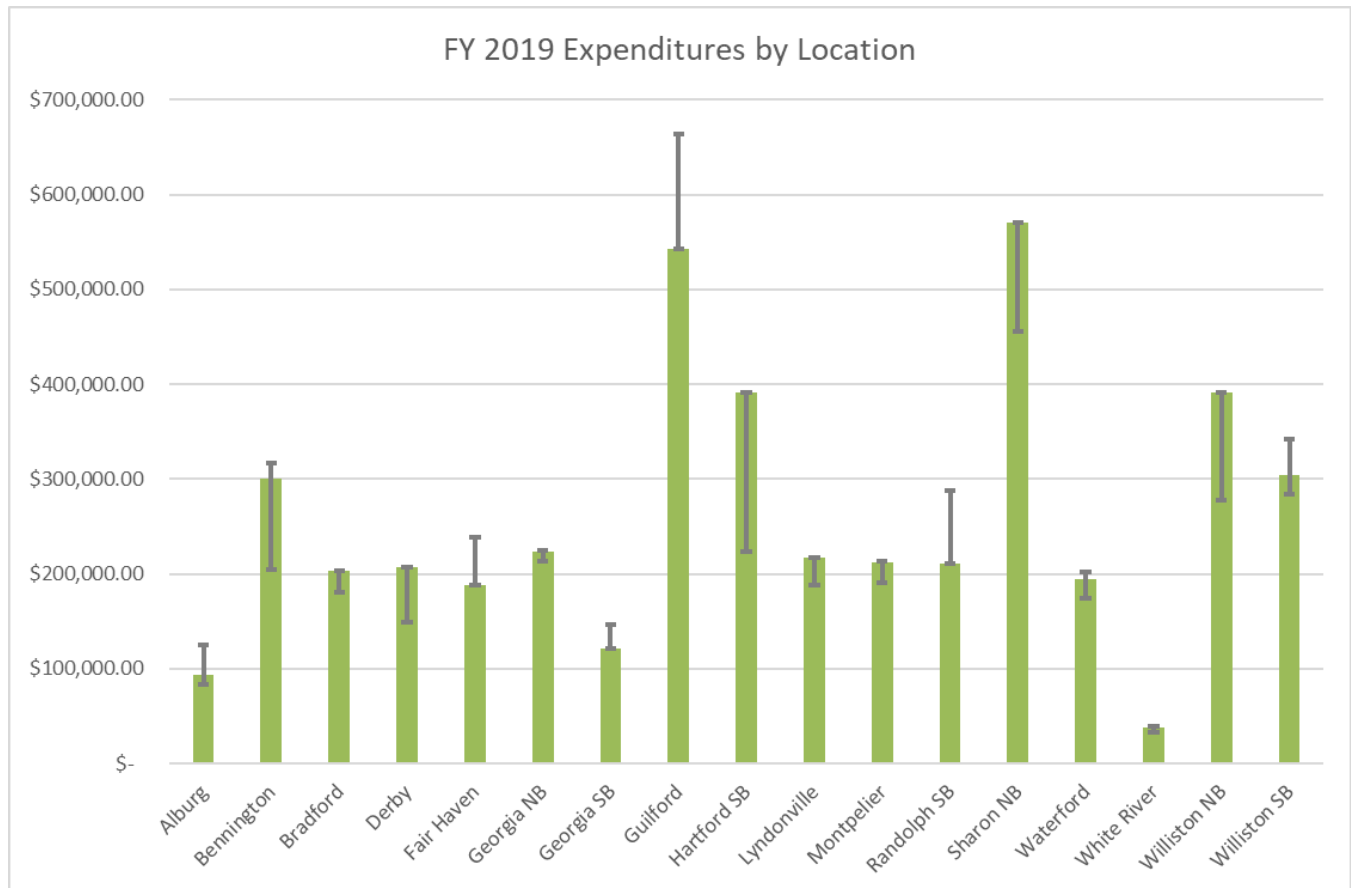


The expenditures made to major preventative maintenance projects funded through VTrans and the SEP 14 agreement are the lowest of the spending categories. Spending on major preventative maintenance projects has varied over the past five years from about \$135,000 to over \$600,000, averaging about \$370,000 during this period. The total appropriations for these major preventative maintenance projects have often exceeded actual expenditures, indicating that the program is not able to leverage all of the budgeted funds within a given year. From FY 2015 through FY 2019, the budgeted funds available for the major preventative maintenance projects has exceeded expenditures anywhere from \$130,000 to \$540,000. Of the \$2.8M total made available through SEP 14 over the last five years, less than 50% of those funds were expended.

System operating and routine maintenance expenditures vary by Visitor Information Center location as shown in **Figure 8** below. These expenditures are generally correlated with the number of annual visitors, where the locations with the highest operating expenses also see

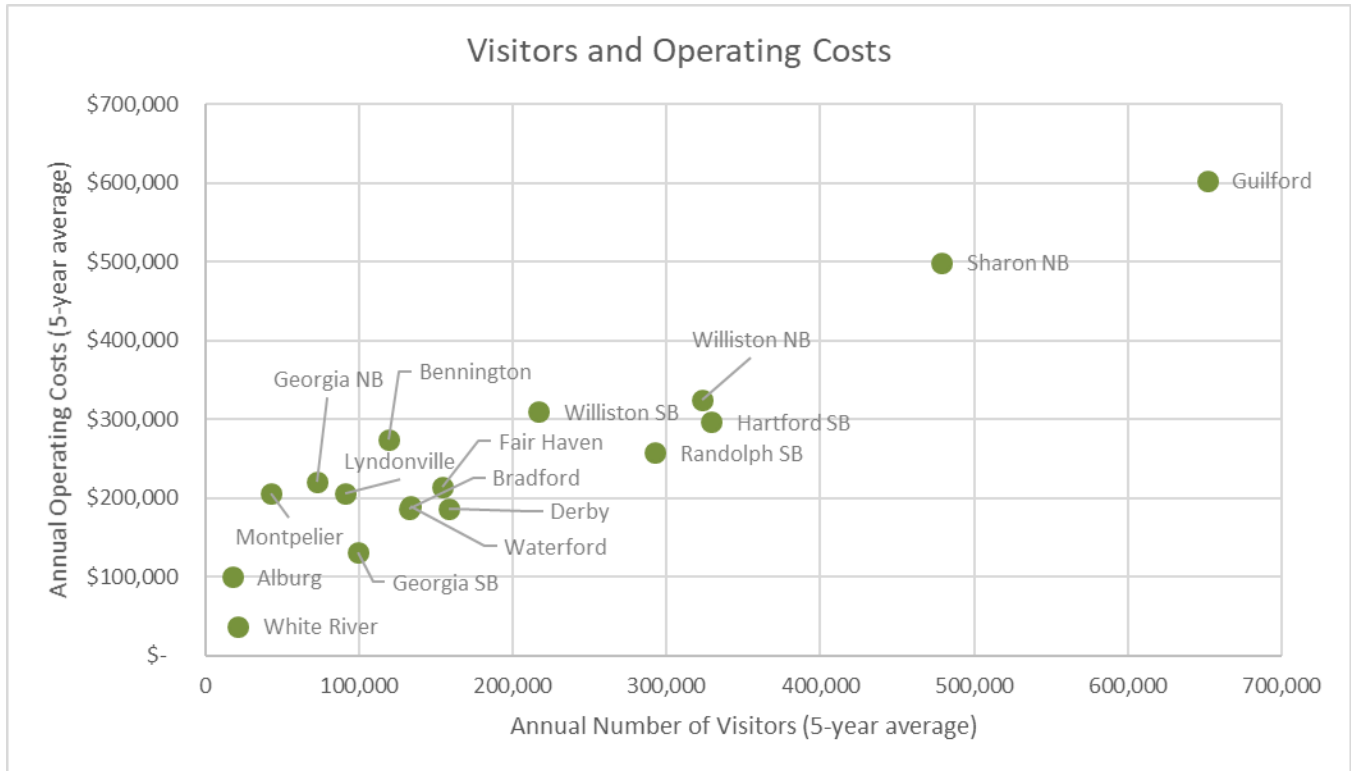
the greatest number of visitors. Similarly, the locations with the greatest variance, as indicated by the error bars depicting the minimum and maximum expenditure years in **Figure 8**, had corresponding changes to the number of visitors. For instance, Sharon has seen an increase in the number of visitors over the depicted period and has similarly seen an uptick in the operating expenses.

Figure 8: Operating & Routine Maintenance Expenditures for FY 2019 by Location (error bars represent the minimum and maximum annual expenditures for each location from FY 2015-2019)



The correlation of visitors to operating costs are further explored in **Figure 9**, where the average number of visitors at each location is compared to average operating costs over the last five years. The facilities with the most visitors, Sharon and Guilford, see approximately 480,000 and 650,000 visitors and have annual operating expenses of approximately \$500,000 and \$600,000, respectively. The locations with the least number of visitors (less than 50,000 annually), include White River Junction, Alburgh, and Montpelier. Of these locations, Montpelier's operating expenditures average approximately \$200,000, while Alburgh and White River Junction have operating expenditures under \$100,000. The White River Junction Welcome Center closed in 2020.

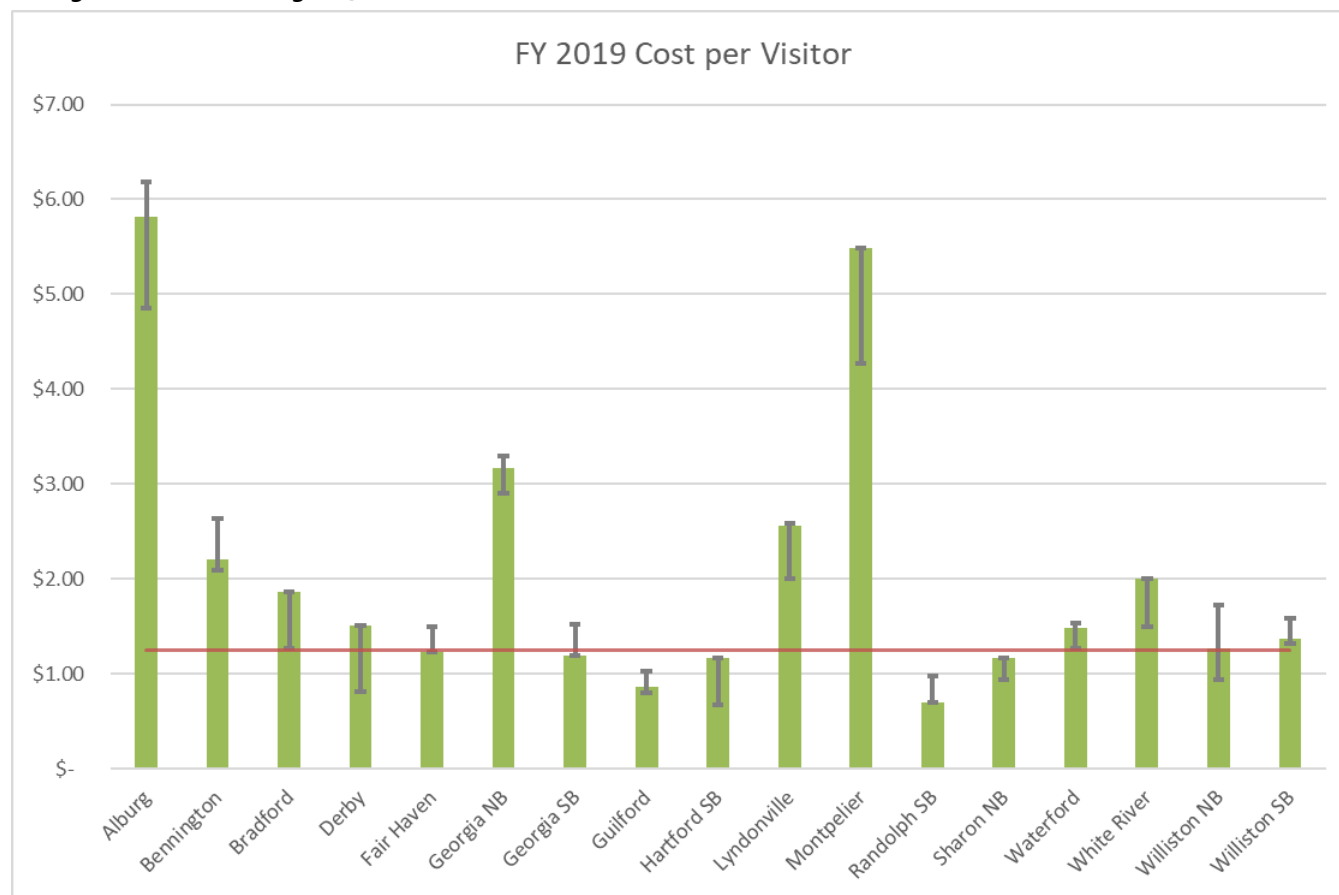
Figure 9: Number of Annual Visitors vs. Annual Operating Costs (based on five-year averages FY 2015-2019)



One of the recommendations from the 2012 *Report to the General Assembly* was an aggregated target of \$1.25 per visitor cost for the system⁸. For FY 2019, operating and routine maintenance expenditures aggregated for the entire system were \$1.57 per visitor. Although the recommendation was intended for the aggregated expenditures averaged for the system as a whole, a comparison of the spending levels by visitor at each individual location to the target provides a metric to gauge the contributing costs for each location (see **Figure 10**). Fair Haven, Georgia Southbound, Guilford, Hartford Southbound, Randolph Southbound, and Sharon had costs per visitor in FY 2019 below \$1.25, indicating that these locations help to draw the average cost per visitor down closer to the targeted average for the system.

⁸ BGS, VTrans, and ACCD, *Future Program of Travel Information Services and Promotion of Vermont Businesses & Products to Motoring Public*, Report to the 2012 General Assembly, 2012.

Figure 10: Cost per Visitor by Location for FY 2019 (error bars represent the minimum and maximum costs from 2015 through 2019 and the target of \$1.25 as recommended) ⁹



Visitor Characteristics and Utilization Trends

Visitor Characteristics

According to a survey conducted in 2011 and reported in the 2012 *Report to the General Assembly*, when asked what the primary reason was for visiting a rest area, respondents overwhelmingly visited rest areas to use the restroom facilities (72%)¹⁰. These participants indicated that clean restrooms and 24-hour services were extremely important and access to maps, brochures, current road condition information, and knowledgeable and friendly staff were very important in their experiences at rest areas.

In a separate survey conducted by the University of Vermont and completed in 2014, Welcome Center visitors indicated that most visitors at the network's Welcome Centers are

⁹ BGS, VTrans, and ACCD, *Future Program of Travel Information Services and Promotion of Vermont Businesses & Products to Motoring Public*, Report to the 2012 General Assembly, 2012.

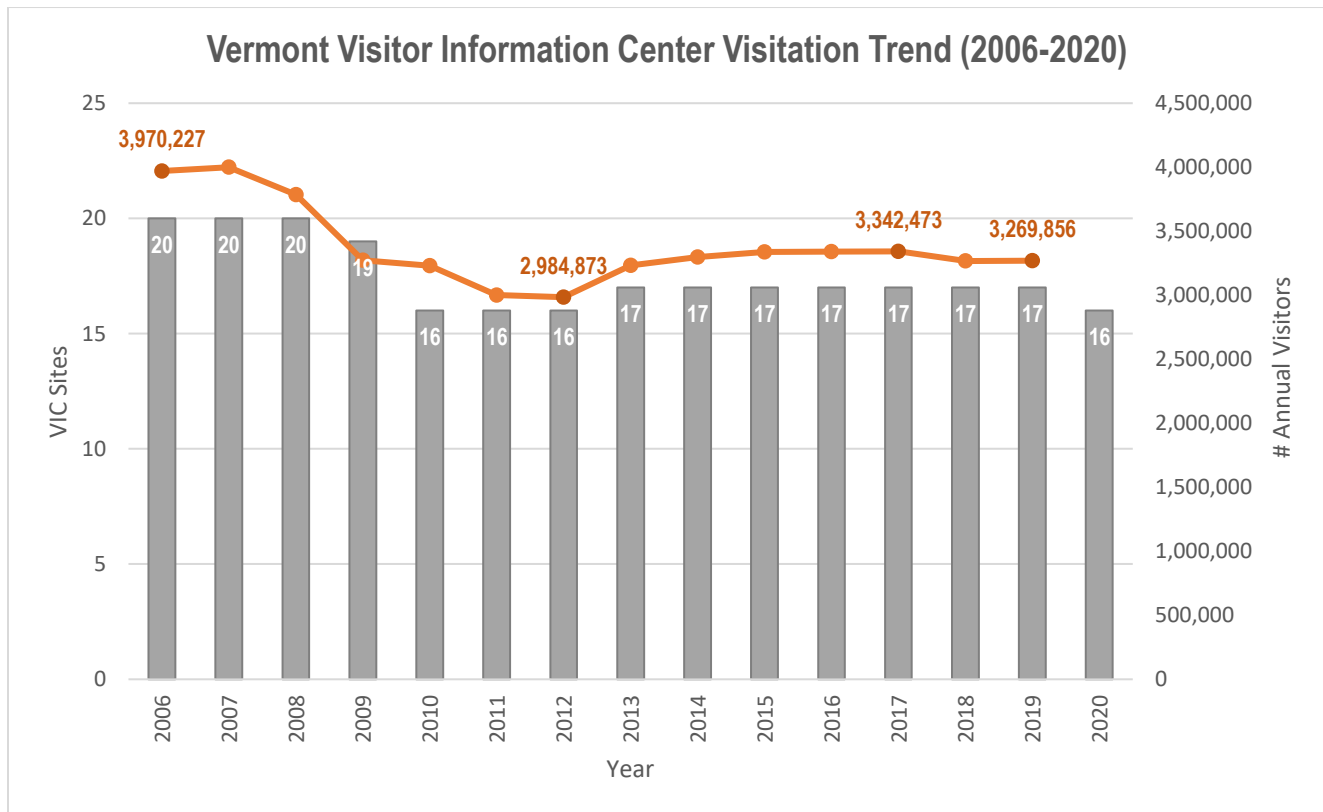
¹⁰ BGS, VTrans, and ACCD, *Future Program of Travel Information Services and Promotion of Vermont Businesses & Products to Motoring Public*, Report to the 2012 General Assembly, 2012.

from out of state (87%)¹¹. These visitors indicated that the activities they intended to participate in during their visits were predominantly sightseeing, shopping, food and drink experiences, and visiting farms or farmer's markets. Many (41%) intended to buy Vermont products while visiting and more than half (55%) intended to stay in Vermont overnight. The Welcome Centers provide a gateway into the state from an external catchment area and provides a captive audience with intentions of spending money while visiting Vermont to which the Vermont brand can be promoted.

Visitation and Utilization Trends

The opportunity to promote the Vermont brand at the network of VICD sites provides exposure to approximately 3.3 million visitors per year, as shown in **Figure 11** below. These counts only include individuals that utilize the building facilities, so it is likely that the network serves even more travelers than is indicative of this metric. The number of visitors has been consistent since the Bennington Welcome Center came online in 2013 and the number of locations remained consistent at 17 sites until 2020, when the White River Junction Visitor Center was closed.

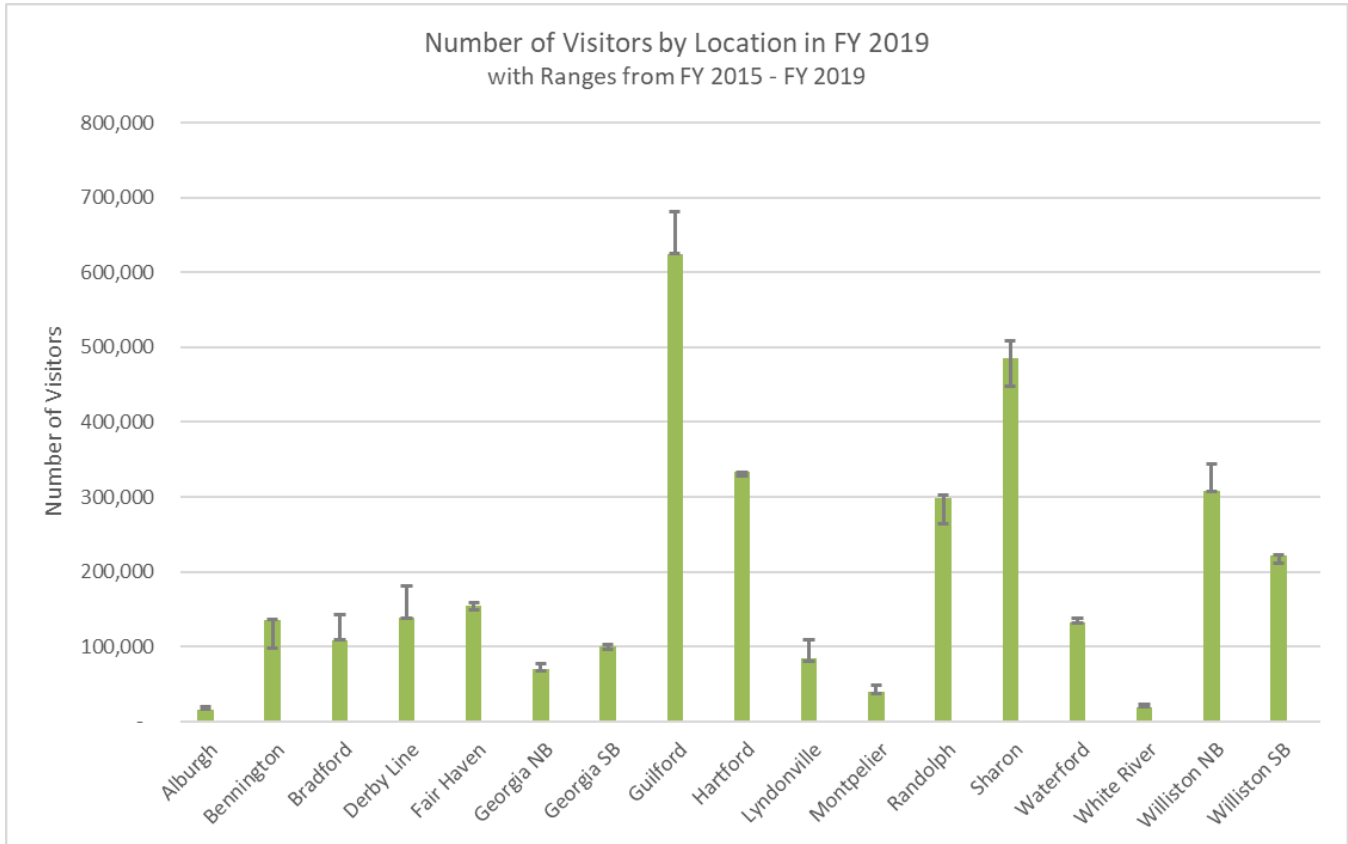
Figure 11: Visitor Information Center Locations and Total Annual Visitors by Location (2006-2020).



¹¹ Valliere, Chase, and Manning, *Vermont Tourism and Recreation Survey*, 2014.

The number of visitors at each facility in the network in 2019 ranged from approximately 17,000 visitors at the Alburgh Welcome Center to approximately 600,000 visitors at the Guilford Welcome Center. The number of visitors to each location has remained fairly consistent over the period from 2015 to 2019 as indicated in **Figure 12**.

Figure 12: Number of Visitors by Location in FY 2019 (error bars indicate the range of visitors for each location between FY 2015-2019; note White River Junction closed in 2020).



Appendix

Appendix A

Table A-1. Spacing of Vermont's Interstate Roadside Rest Area Facilities based on Directional Distance to Nearest Facility

Facility Name	Distance to Nearest Facility (Miles)
Vernon South Parking Area	3.14
Randolph Southbound Information Center*	3.44
Guilford North Parking Area	4.23
Ryegate North Parking Area	8.23
Derby Line Welcome Center*	9.19
Coventry North Parking Area and Weigh Station	10.8
Wheelock North Parking Area	11.03
Barton North Parking Area	12.52
Bradford Information Center*	13.05
Ryegate South Parking Area	15.02
Williston Southbound Information Center*	15.02
Springfield South Parking Area	15.42
Putney North Parking Area	15.54
Waterbury North Parking Area	16.91
Southeastern Vermont Welcome Center*	17.41
Georgia Northbound Information Center*	19.9*
Westminster South Parking Area	20.55
Barnet North Scenic Turnout	20.98
Waterford Welcome Center*	24.56
Lyndonville Information Center*	25.26
Coventry South Parking Area and Weigh Station	25.67
Williston Northbound Information Center*	28.01
Georgia Southbound Information Center*	28.84
Hartford Welcome Center*	28.91
Randolph South Parking Area	29.9
Bradford South Parking Area	31.7
Waterbury South Parking Area	33.28
Sharon Welcome Center*	56.2
Rockingham North Parking Area	60.9

* VICD Location

Table A-2. Directional Spacing of Vermont's Interstate Roadside Facilities based on Route

I-89 North

Facility Name	Distance to Nearest Facility	Gap Between Facilities if Removed
Sharon Welcome Center*	56.2	68.8
Waterbury North Parking Area	16.91	73.1
Williston Northbound Information Center*	28.01	44.92
Georgia Northbound Information Center*	19.9	47.91
* VICD Location		

I-89 South

Facility Name	Distance to Nearest Facility	Gap Between Facilities if Removed
Georgia Southbound Information Center*	28.84	48.34
Williston Southbound Information Center*	15.02	43.86
Waterbury South Parking Area	33.28	48.3
Randolph Southbound Information Center*	3.44	36.72
Randolph South Parking Area	29.9	33.34
* VICD Location		

I-91 North

Facility Name	Distance to Nearest Facility	Gap Between Facilities if Removed
Guilford North Parking Area	4.23	6.53
Guilford (Southeastern Vermont) Welcome Center*	17.41	21.64
Putney North Parking Area	15.54	32.95
Rockingham North Parking Area	60.9	76.44
Bradford Information Center*	13.05	73.95
Ryegate North Parking Area	8.23	21.28
Barnet North Scenic Turnout	20.98	29.21
Wheelock North Parking Area	11.03	32.01
Barton North Parking Area	12.52	23.55
Coventry North Parking Area and Weigh Station	10.8	23.32
* VICD Location		

I-91 South

Facility Name	Distance to Nearest Facility	Gap Between Facilities if Removed
Derby Line Welcome Center*	9.19	10.41
Coventry South Parking Area and Weigh Station	25.67	34.86
Lyndonville Information Center*	25.26	50.93
Ryegate South Parking Area	15.02	40.28
Bradford South Parking Area	31.7	46.72
Hartford Welcome Center*	28.91	60.61
Springfield South Parking Area	15.42	44.33
Westminster South Parking Area	20.55	35.97
* VICD Location		

I-93 North

Facility Name	Distance to Nearest Facility	Gap Between Facilities if Removed
Waterford Welcome Center*	24.56	27.6
* VICD Location		

Table A-3. Directional Spacing of Facilities considered to be part of the Jason's Law Network

Facility Name	Distance to Nearest Facility (Miles)
Alburgh Welcome Center	5
Barnet North Scenic Turnout	21
Barton North Scenic Turnout	13
Bennington Chain-Up/Down Site	17
Bennington Welcome Center	3
Bradford North Rest Area	13
Bradford South Parking Area	32
Charlotte Parking Area	18
Clarendon North Parking Area	51
Clarendon South Parking Area	48
Colchester North Weigh Station	15
Colchester South Weigh Station	13
Coventry North Parking Area	11
Coventry South Parking Area	26
Derby South Welcome Center	10
Fair Haven Welcome center	22
Fairhaven Weigh Station	22
Ferrisburgh Parking Area	10
Georgia North Rest Area	20
Georgia South Rest Area	15
Guilford North Parking Area	4
Southeastern Vermont Welcome Center	15
Hartford South Rest Area	29
Ira Parking Area	11
Lyndon South Rest Area	25
Putney North Parking Area	16
Putney North Weigh Station	3
Putney South Weigh Station	18
Randolph South Parking Area	4
Randolph South Rest Area	34
Ryegate North Parking Area	8

Ryegate South Parking Area	15
Sharon Rest Area	57
Rockingham North Parking Area	61
Springfield South Parking Area	16
Vernon Rest Area	4
Waterbury South Parking Area	33
Waterford North Rest Area	25
Waterbury North Parking Area	17
Westminster South Parking Area	2
Wheelock North Scenic Turnout	11
Williston North Rest Area	13
Williston South Rest Area	16
Wilmington Chain-Up/Down Site	27

Appendix B:

Summary of State and Federal Regulations Related to Rest Areas

Federal Regulations

23 CFR Part 752 – Landscape & Roadside Development

23 CFR § 752.2 - Policy

(c) The development of the roadside to include landscape development, safety rest areas, and the preservation of valuable adjacent scenic lands is a necessary component of highway development. Planning and development of the roadside should be concurrent with or closely follow that of the highway. Further, the development of travel information centers and systems is encouraged as an effective method of providing necessary information to the traveling public.

23 CFR § 752.3 - Definitions.

(a) Safety rest area. A roadside facility safely removed from the traveled way with parking and such facilities for the motorist deemed necessary for his rest, relaxation, comfort and information needs. The term is synonymous with "rest and recreation areas."

(c) Information centers. Facilities located at safety rest areas which provide information of interest to the traveling public.

(d) Information systems. Facilities located within the right-of-way which provide information of interest to the traveling public. An information system is not a sign, display or device otherwise permitted under 23 U.S.C. 131 or prohibited by any local, State or Federal law or regulation.

23 CFR § 752.5 – Safety Rest Areas

(a) Safety rest areas should provide facilities reasonably necessary for the comfort, convenience, relaxation, and information needs of the motorist. Caretakers' quarters may be provided in conjunction with a safety rest area at such locations where accommodations are deemed necessary. All facilities within the rest area are to provide full consideration and accommodation for the handicapped.

(b) The State may permit the placement of vending machines in existing or new safety rest areas located on the rights-of-way of the Interstate system for the purpose of dispensing such food, drink, or other articles as the State determines are appropriate and desirable, except that the dispensing by any means, of petroleum products or motor vehicle replacement parts shall not be allowed. Such vending machines shall be operated by the State.

- (c) The State may operate the vending machines directly or may contract with a vendor for the installation, operation, and maintenance of the vending machines. In permitting the placement of vending machines the State shall give priority to vending machines which are operated through the State licensing agency designated pursuant to section 2(a)(5) of the Randolph-Sheppard Act, U.S.C. 107(a)(5).
- (d) Access from the safety rest areas to adjacent publicly owned conservation and recreation areas may be permitted if access to these areas is only available through the rest area and if these areas or their usage does not adversely affect the facilities of the safety rest area.
- (e) The scenic quality of the site, its accessibility and adaptability, and the availability of utilities are the prime considerations in the selection of rest area sites. A statewide safety rest area system plan should be maintained. This plan should include development priorities to ensure safety rest areas will be constructed first at locations most needed by the motorist. Proposals for safety rest areas or similar facilities on Federal-aid highways in suburban or urban areas shall be special case and must be fully justified before being authorized by the FHWA Regional Administrator.
- (f) Facilities within newly constructed safety rest areas should meet the forecast needs of the design year. Expansion and modernization of older existing rest areas that do not provide adequate service should be considered.
- (g) No charge to the public may be made for goods and services at safety rest areas except for telephone and articles dispensed by vending machines.

23 USC § 111. Agreements Relating to Use of and Access to Rights-of-Way— Interstate System

a) In General.—

All agreements between the Secretary and the State transportation department for the construction of projects on the Interstate System shall contain a clause providing that the State will not add any points of access to, or exit from, the project in addition to those approved by the Secretary in the plans for such project, without the prior approval of the Secretary. Such agreements shall also contain a clause providing that the State will not permit automotive service stations or other commercial establishments for serving motor vehicle users to be constructed or located on the rights-of-way of the Interstate System and will not change the boundary of any right-of-way on the Interstate System to accommodate construction of, or afford access to, an automotive service station or other commercial establishment. Such agreements may, however, authorize a State or political subdivision thereof to use or permit the use of the airspace above and below the established grade line of the highway pavement for such purposes as will not impair the full use and safety of the highway, as will not require or permit vehicular access to such space directly from such established grade line of the highway, or otherwise interfere in any way with the free flow of traffic on the Interstate System. Nothing in this section, or in any agreement entered into under this section, shall require the discontinuance, obstruction, or removal of any establishment for serving motor vehicle users on any highway which has been, or is hereafter, designated as a highway or route on the Interstate System (1) if such

establishment (A) was in existence before January 1, 1960, (B) is owned by a State, and (C) is operated through concessionaries or otherwise, and (2) if all access to, and exits from, such establishment conform to the standards established for such a highway under this title.

b) Rest Areas.—

1) In general.—

Notwithstanding subsection (a), the Secretary shall permit a State to acquire, construct, operate, and maintain a rest area along a highway on the Interstate System in such State.

2) Limited activities.—

The Secretary shall permit limited commercial activities within a rest area under paragraph (1), if the activities are available only to customers using the rest area and are limited to—

(A) commercial advertising and media displays if such advertising and displays are—

(i) exhibited solely within any facility constructed in the rest area; and

(ii) not legible from the main traveled way;

(B) items designed to promote tourism in the State, limited to books, DVDs, and other media;

(C) tickets for events or attractions in the State of a historical or tourism-related nature;

(D) travel-related information, including maps, travel booklets, and hotel coupon booklets; and

(E) lottery machines, provided that the priority afforded to blind vendors under subsection (c) applies to this subparagraph.

3) Private operators.—

A State may permit a private party to operate such commercial activities.

4) Limitation on use of revenues.—

A State shall use any revenues received from the commercial activities in a rest area under this section to cover the costs of acquiring, constructing, operating, and maintaining rest areas in the State.

20 USC 6A Section 107 – Operation of Vending Facilities “Randolph-Sheppard Act”

a) Authorization

For the purposes of providing blind persons with remunerative employment, enlarging the economic opportunities of the blind, and stimulating the blind to greater efforts in

striving to make themselves self-supporting, blind persons licensed under the provisions of this chapter shall be authorized to operate vending facilities on any Federal property.

b) Preferences regulations; justification for limitation on operation

In authorizing the operation of vending facilities on Federal property, priority shall be given to blind persons licensed by a State agency as provided in this chapter; and the Secretary, through the Commissioner, shall, after consultation with the Administrator of General Services and other heads of departments, agencies, or instrumentalities of the United States in control of the maintenance, operation, and protection of Federal property, prescribe regulations designed to assure that—

- (1) the priority under this subsection is given to such licensed blind persons (including assignment of vending machine income pursuant to section 107d-3 of this title to achieve and protect such priority), and
- (2) wherever feasible, one or more vending facilities are established on all Federal property to the extent that any such facility or facilities would not adversely affect the interests of the United States.

Any limitation on the placement or operation of a vending facility based on a finding that such placement or operation would adversely affect the interests of the United States shall be fully justified in writing to the Secretary, who shall determine whether such limitation is justified. A determination made by the Secretary pursuant to this provision shall be binding on any department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States affected by such determination. The Secretary shall publish such determination, along with supporting documentation, in the Federal Register.

Jason's Law

(a) **Establishment.** — In cooperation with appropriate State, regional, and local governments, the Secretary of Transportation shall implement a pilot program to address the shortage of long-term parking for commercial motor vehicles on the National Highway System.

(b) **Allocation Of Funds.** —

- (1) **IN GENERAL.** —The Secretary of Transportation shall allocate funds made available to carry out this section among States, metropolitan planning organizations, and local governments.
- (2) **APPLICATIONS.**—To be eligible for an allocation under this section, a State (as defined in section 101(a) of title 23, United States Code), metropolitan planning organization, or local government shall submit to the Secretary an application at such time and containing such information as the Secretary may require.
- (3) **ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.** —Funds allocated under this subsection shall be used by the recipient for projects described in an application approved by the Secretary.

Such projects shall serve the National Highway System and may include the following:

- (A) Constructing safety rest areas (as defined in section 120(c) of title 23, United States Code) that include parking for commercial motor vehicles.
- (B) Constructing commercial motor vehicle parking facilities adjacent to commercial truck stops and travel plazas.
- (C) Opening existing facilities to commercial motor vehicle parking, including inspection and weigh stations and park-and-ride facilities.
- (D) Promoting the availability of publicly or privately provided commercial motor vehicle parking on the National Highway System using intelligent transportation systems and other means.
- (E) Constructing turnouts along the National Highway System for commercial motor vehicles.
- (F) Making capital improvements to public commercial motor vehicle parking facilities currently closed on a seasonal basis.
- (G) Improving the geometric design of interchanges on the National Highway System to improve access to commercial motor vehicle parking facilities.

(4) **PRIORITY.** —In allocating funds made available to carry out this section, the Secretary shall give priority to applicants that—

- (A) demonstrate a severe shortage of commercial motor vehicle parking capacity in the corridor to be addressed;
- (B) have consulted with affected State and local governments, community groups, private providers of commercial motor vehicle parking, and motorist and trucking organizations; and
- (C) demonstrate that their proposed projects are likely to have positive effects on highway safety, traffic congestion, or air quality.

(c) **Report To Congress.**—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall submit to Congress a report on the results of the pilot program.

(d) **Funding.**—

(1) IN GENERAL. —There is authorized to be appropriated from the Highway Trust Fund (other than the Mass Transit Account) to carry out this section \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2010 through 2015.

(2) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—Funds authorized under this subsection shall be available for obligation in the same manner as if the funds were apportioned under chapter 1 of title 23, United States Code, except that such funds shall not be transferable and shall remain available until expended, and the Federal share of the cost of a project under this section shall be determined in accordance with sections 120(b) and 120(c) of such title.

(e) **Treatment of Projects.** —Notwithstanding any other provision of law, projects funded under this section shall be treated as projects on a Federal-aid system under chapter 1 of title 23, United States Code.

State Regulations

29 V.S.A. § 152

§ 152. Duties of Commissioner

- a) The Commissioner of Buildings and General Services, in addition to the duties expressly set forth elsewhere by law, shall have the authority to:

(30) Provide services to the traveling public, lease space, sell products, and conduct any other activities within limits set forth in the federal Surface Transportation Act and Randolph-Sheppard Act and rules adopted thereunder, to administer the information and welcome centers; and use funds generated in the centers to supplement funds for maintaining and operating the centers.